2: Stefansson--231
181, 576, 609, 117

(1908-12) 1914

Copper Eskimo

"May 14. General Characteristics of the People. The people, as Mogg's and Klinkenberg's people report from Victoria Island, are apparently of superior type. They look clean as compared with Baillie, for instance, and are models of good behavior. In fact, have manners towards strangers such as I do not suppose any white men have ever honored themselves by showing to any branch of the Eskimo race. There is interest, but no forward curiosity shown with regard to all the strange things we have and do; no laughter at a dialect which must seem funny to them; the greatest courtesy in everything, --the best seal for the visitor; the first choice of food; continual expressions of friendship; no questions as to why we came. No spitting out and calling 'bad' food we give them to taste, though all say 'We are not used to it and do not like the taste.' The same with smoking. 'We do not expect people from far away to have no manners different from us, so go ahead and smoke,' but several have had to leave the house when T. and B. smoked together. Continual invitations to come and eat though they are short of food, got three seals yesterday for thirty-eight people, an average catch, and continued bringing presents of blubber for our lamp and meat to cook, small pieces, for there is little to give. The snow today keeps melting in holes from sun, and each house is carefully patched as it appears, our clothes are carefully brushed of the least particle of snow in entering a house. On could particularize endlessly, but the sum is courtesy and good breeding with generous kindness."

2: Stefansson--237
576, 117

(1908-12) 1914

Copper Eskimo

"Entering a house, everyone except members of the family utters a series of sharp exclamations from the time he stoops to enter the alleyway till his head is inside the door proper. The first to come to our house each morning always comes singing loudly; also, when no visitors known to be with us, while yet at a distance."

2: Stefansson--240-241
181, 576, 609, 117

(1908-12) 1914

Copper Eskimo

"General Characteristics. While they probably once had an organic connection with the people towards Cape Lyon (and one indeed has a mother from 'far west') their present movements seem to be restricted to less than fifty miles of coast and to the strait ice just north of them. Some spend an occasional summer in Victoria Island with the Haneragmiut or the Puiplirmiut farther east. This is a very confined sphere. Perhaps this has had a strong influence. At any rate, after allowing for their not well understanding our speech, I am inclined to consider them somewhat less intelligent in general than any I have before seen. Eskimo everywhere are little interested in the oustide world; these show practically none. But as their intelligence is less, so their general kindliness and good breeding is far beyond anything I have before seen. Of course, I have seen only 'civilized' and mostly christianized people heretofore.

Their generosity was always prominent, and the expression of it was monotonous. Perhaps because of difficulty of conversing and a distaste for remaining silent, considering it impolite they kept constantly repeating 'We hope you are having enough to eat.' 'We want you to be content [241] (not lonesome) while with us. We are therefore trying to feed you well, for a man with a full stomach is seldom discontented. He is well off who is well fed,' etc. These were endlessly repeated. I believe some of their phrases have a status similar to our proverbs, for their phraseology was almost never, if ever varied. Whenever one of these sentences was uttered, most or all present acclaimed

with '1-yarr-lĭ,' which we do not understand exactly, but which clearly is akin to our 'amen,' 'so it is,' 'so be it.' When we left we took with us a number of small pieces of meat, presents, and their last words were inquiries if it was enough and urging us to speak up if we wanted more. It has been noted that they have little themselves, especially since they have neglected sealing largely since we first came. When we were not five miles off they were spread all over the ice, hunting in earnest for the first time since we came.

Modesty is not among their conspicuous virtues, however, for as often as they expressed friendliness (which was about every five minutes) they would say 'ĭlyĭranaitturut' 'koyanaktūrut,' 'nagōyūrut tamapta' and when they spoke of other groups, 'They are excellent people, just as good people as we are.' They are as monotonous in this self-praise as in their good wishes to us, etc. It is to be noted, however, that the connotation of these phrases is not so much that they are an excellent, superior people, as that they are harmless, friendly, not to be distrusted. A phrase much used by the Hanerágmiut and occasionally by the Akuliakattagmiut is 'naunaittūrut' which literally, nĕllūnait turut, we are easily seen, easily discerned from afar, but which I suppose denotes 'easy to see through,' 'not given to underhand and secret practices,' 'not treacherous,' really as we appear.'"

2: Stefansson--252 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
576, 117

"Ceremonies of Meeting. Noted, but did not understand that Iglix̌irk, the man we first met stroked Tan.'s clothes over with downward motion. Hala did the same the other night and we now understand this is connected with turnrak belief, to remove evil influences. Apattok fed us each with a piece of raw blubber which he would not let us touch but himself placed in our mouths. Possibly simply hospitality, more likely to ward off evil influences, or to see if we were human and not spirits. (Some of my folklore tales from the west imply blubber fatal to spirits, kills them.) Fear of our guns not shown since by Akuliakattagmiut, probably through Hanbury's Igliki telling of them."

11: Stefansson--179 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 576

"...I had only to give them a hint as to what interested me, and they put all their information on that subject at my disposal; but on their own part they showed the greatest delicacy in asking questions. Were they not interested, I asked them, to know why I had come and where I was going? Yes, they were interested, but they knew that if I wanted them to know I would tell them. Asking many questions of strangers was not their custom, but they considered that I asked many because that was no doubt the manner of my people; it was to be expected that men coming from so great a distance would have customs different from theirs; and as for them, they were glad to answer my questions, and I would have to stay many days before they got tired of doing whatever they could to show they were glad I had come."

11: Stefansson--180 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 576

"Although the house was full of guests at my home-coming, they merely stayed a few minutes, for some one suggested that we were no doubt tired and sleepy and would like to be left alone. In the morning, they said, we should have plenty of time for talking."

11: Stefansson--181 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 576

"From familiarity with their customs I now know that it was a signal from him that brought us our earliest visitors of the morning, the hunter whom we had first encountered the previous evening. He came from the village, walking slowly and singing at the top of his voice so that we might have ample warning of his approach. When he came to the outer door of our twenty-foot alleyway he stopped and announced himself: 'I am So-and-so; my intentions are friendly; I have no knife. May I come in?' This was the invariable formula in our case; among themselves they would merely announce as they were about to enter a house: 'I am So-and-So; I am coming in."

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

One woman gave me a knife to present to a kinsman, another a pair of sealskin slippers; and so many sent messages that I kept a special memorandum of them all in my note-book.

One commission, and one alone, I declined to take upon my shoulders, although petitioned by an old, old man whose voice quavered so that it was hard to refuse him. He besought me to restore his widowed daughter, who lived somewhere to the eastward; to load her property upon my sled, share my tent with her, and bring her safely to his home. The task was beyond my capacity, but I referred it to our party at the station, and proposed that one of my colleagues should rescue the distressed lady. The choice fell on Johansen, whose beard was long and fatherly. But Johansen demurred, claiming that a younger knight, Cox or O'Neill, was more fitted for such an enterprise. They, too, drew back; one and all ungallantly refused their aid. When I met the woman later in Coronation Gulf, she proved to be the greasiest and worst-favoured native along the entire Arctic coast!

The Eskimos had no word for farewell in their language, but came and went without ceremony. We left them in the same way, hitching up our dog-team early in the morning and crossing the narrow strait to our station.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

solitary vigil, it certainly left no traces in her appearance or mode of greeting. Her people, unlike other Eskimo tribes, never voluntarily abandoned the aged and infirm to die of cold and starvation, but prolonged their closing years with loving care. Parents and children were united by tender bonds that neither time nor distance dissolved. I once witnessed the chance meeting of an old woman with her middle-aged son who had been living in a remote tribe for many years; the stalwart hunter knelt in the snow at her feet, and, as she raised her jacket, reverently touched with his lips the breast that had nourished him in childhood.

A little north of our camp, Bad Creek cut through an outcrop of dolomite, forming a narrow S-shaped cañon a quarter of a mile long and forty feet deep. The locality was very familiar to my companions. From a ledge just under the brow of the cliff we dropped our hooks into a deep pool, and in a few hours hauled out seven large trout. (Whether any trout remained in the pool all winter, or whether they ascended to a lake before the freeze-up, I do not know; above and below there was less than three feet of water in the stream, which would freeze to the bottom before Christmas.) A gravel beach at the outlet of the cañon contained numerous pebbles of iron pyrites, used by the natives for striking fire; and a neighbouring meadow was white with the seeds of the cotton-grass that supplied both tinder and wicks for the lamps. The

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

wonder uttering an occasional exclamation. We heard 123
the creaking of the winch as the anchor was lifted, and we saw the vessel swing slowly round and move toward the entrance. Two bells—the engines stopped. "I am going," I said, as I threw at Icehouse's feet the leather belt that I had worn in my wanderings, the belt that she had so often examined with envious eyes. Ikpuck and Jennie pushed off the dinghy. "I am [576] going," I said again, using their only greeting of farewell; and they answered together, "You are going."

In the open channel that led us westward I climbed to the crow's-nest and looked back toward the land through my binoculars. The brown monotonous coastline rose and fell in gentle undulations far across the moving ice-field. Where shore and ice commingled a solitary tent showed faintly. Something dark beside it seemed to move. Was it Ikpuck?